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vases and marbles; but we can see nothing but a clumsy attempt to familiarize the minds of the humbler and less educated classes of persons not brought up in Romanism to Romish modes of thought, when we see it stated in such a publication, that Masaccio (of whose works but three insignificant and unattractive heads are contained in the collection) was so pious that he "always painted the Madonna on his knees;" or find that its readers are gravely informed that "they ought not to be shocked by things which may seem strange to them, such as seeing in the early paintings 'the Father and the Son painted among the clouds, with angels round them, or as sitting on thrones to judge;' or that the Virgin Mary was constantly painted in those days, because 'people had learned to fear God more than to love Him; and as religion cannot be all fear, they worshipped the Virgin Mary, and made her as beautiful as they could, with the infant Christ in her arms, and thought she could intercede for them,' without adding one word disapproving of either the idea or the practice.

We cannot help fearing that the wide dissemination of such an attractively cheap guide to these pictures may have done something to familiarize the minds of the working classes of Manchester with ideas to which they have previously been strangers, and which a little more vigilance on the part of those who do not overlook the importance of cheap publications might, we humbly think, easily have guarded, by the timely production of an equally cheap and more instructive publication. But when, alas! will Protestants be equally watchful of opportunities as their ever vigilant and indefatigable opponents, who will do anything and everything to inculcate or insinuate their principles, except defend them after the good old manly English style, by sturdy and straightforward argument?

THE following is a slightly abridged notice of an article in the *Durham Chronicle* of the 7th inst., reprinted by the *Tablet* of Saturday last, under the title of "Diocese of Hexham; Soiree and Concert at Houghton-le-Spring." We confess we are heartily ashamed of the Protestants who could be induced by the mere love of amusement to be present at a meeting confessedly designed to promote the purposes of a *Roman Catholic mission*, and at which the health of "his Holiness the Pope" was ostentatiously given, before that of the Queen:—

"DIOCESE OF HEXHAM.

"Soiree and Concert at Houghton-le-Spring.

"The annual soiree, held in connection with St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Houghton-le-Spring, took place on Tuesday last. The soiree had been, as usual, looked forward to with considerable interest by many of the inhabitants of Houghton and the surrounding locality, both Protestants and Roman Catholics. Though the beneficial proceeds of the soirees are devoted to the general purposes of the *Roman Catholic mission* at Houghton, yet the proceedings of the day of themselves hardly show that they are intended in aid of any class object, and are therefore joined in by great numbers of many religious denominations. Of late years the entertainments have seldom, if ever, failed to attract a very large assembly of people, and on Tuesday the gathering was larger than on any previous occasion.

"Tea was served in a marquee erected in a field in the rear of the church, and in the school-room connected with that place of worship. Both places were many times filled by the people. In all, about one thousand six hundred persons partook of the refreshment, and about 300 more were admitted to the concert at half price. It was necessary to find the first comers some amusement whilst their more tardy brethren were discussing tea and cakes, and this amusement was found in strolling about the field behind the church, and listening to the strains of *Lady Londonderry's band*. This very excellent band deserved the hearty thanks of the company for the spirit and precision with which they played many excellent and pleasing pieces—amongst which may be mentioned the *Piccolomini Waltzes*, the *New Lancers' Quadrilles*, the *Court of St. James' Quadrilles*, the *Woodbine Polka*, &c. Some of the dance music played was most pleasing, and all was performed in a very superior style. After a considerable number of the assemblage had enjoyed their teas, they took possession of a large

and commodious marquee, which had also been erected in the field, and prepared for a concert of vocal and instrumental music. The marquee, which was capable of holding about 800 persons, was gaily decorated with flags, amongst which were conspicuous those of St. George and St. Michael, the latter being the emblem of the *Patron Saint of the church*. During intervals between the music some sentiments were proposed. The first was given by the Rev. A. Watson, who presided, and who was supported by the Rev. W. Markland, of Sedgfield, and the Rev. James Crolly, of Sunderland. The rev. gentleman said he had to thank them for their attendance. In a lively strain he referred to his having made tea for them for ten years, and was led on to say that if the numbers of those who should come on future occasions should increase upon the number then present, as the latter had upon the number of those present at the first and some succeeding soirees, he should be induced to believe that his tea-making was approaching perfection. He had great reason to be grateful for the increase in the attendance as compared with former years; and he might say that from his first coming into the neighbourhood he had experienced the greatest readiness from their friends about to join them in any reasonable and innocent amusement. He next adverted to the disappearance at Houghton of that religious animosity which, he said, is peculiar to some neighbourhoods. When he first came there he had experienced a little of it, but he was glad to say it had quite gone now, and he had almost quite forgotten it. After saying that they had got into some disorder, in consequence of the pressure upon the services of the ladies at the tea tables, and referring to their having opened the concert themselves—of which he was very glad, he said if he were to begin in order, he would give them several sentiments, and the first of them would be 'The Pope.' They didn't bring them there to hurt any man's feelings. Their object was merely mutual and innocent amusement. They did not mix religion with those things, for they considered that there is a time for religion and a time for amusement. This, he hoped, was a time for amusement, but they knew that they, as good Catholics, must give that recognition of their spiritual superior which was due to him. He therefore proposed 'His Holiness the Pope.' At a subsequent opportunity, Mr. Watson said he had another duty to perform—to give them 'Health, long life, and a happy reign to Victoria, our Queen.' It was their duty to pay due respect to their temporal superiors. The Queen, he said, is the head of temporal superiors in this realm. As there was no time to spare, he begged to give, without further remarks, 'The Queen.' Other sentiments were afterwards given, and a comic song was sung and some racy anecdotes were told by a facetious elderly man, who brought roars of laughter from his audience. Mr. Hemy at the pianoforte, the Misses Blake with their liquid notes, and Lady Londonderry's band also beguiled the time. Meanwhile great numbers of people were enjoying themselves in the field, where many amusing games were being carried on, with apparently no small degree of amusement and delight, not only by the youngsters, but by many 'children of an older growth.' The weather was peculiarly favourable for outdoor amusements. The whole of the day was favoured with most glorious weather, and towards evening the atmosphere was delightfully pleasant, and especially suitable for a little romping on the green turf. At the close of the proceedings, which did not take place till almost ten o'clock, the band played 'God save the Queen,' after which the large assemblage quietly dispersed with the utmost good order and good humour."—*Durham Chronicle*, Aug. 7.

How far the purposes of this Roman Catholic mission may have been promoted by "the beneficial proceeds" of this soiree we cannot say; though probably the money paid for admission by those 1,900 persons was such as to afford a reasonable profit to the rev. tea-maker; but as to the moral effects likely to be produced upon the Protestant mind by either the Piccolomini waltzes, the Lancers' quadrilles, or the Woodbine polka, or even the "comic songs and racy anecdotes," and subsequent "romping upon the green turf," we cannot help supposing them to be almost as equivocal as those of frequenting an Irish pattern, or a station at a holy well on the saint's day in Ireland; though, perhaps, they may have been less actually shocking to the sense of propriety of the good people of England. We mean nothing personally offensive to any clergyman of any religious persuasion, but we cannot help inquiring whether sufficient care can be taken of the Protestants of Houghton-le-Spring, if it be true that such Roman Catholic missionary meetings are really resorted to by "great numbers of various religious denominations?" We think there is a wide difference between the disappearance of that religious animosity which never should be indulged in

anywhere under any circumstances, and the active countenance and assistance of Protestants of various denominations in advancing a Roman Catholic mission to the Protestants of Hexham.

We also read in the *Tablet* the following interesting notice to summer excursionists. Surely it is not the fault of either the hierarchical or railway authorities, if "Religion made easy" does not become universally popular in the present day:—

"DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER.

"A meeting of Catholics was held on Wednesday evening last, in Duke-street, Manchester-square, for the purpose of organising a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Boulogne-sur-Mer. We understand that the South-Eastern Railway have agreed to offer every facility to the undertaking. Our readers will scarcely need to be reminded that his Holiness has lately granted to this sanctuary of Our Lady the Pilgrimage Indulgences of Loretto. Further particulars may be learned on application to Mr. Pagliano, Brook-green, Hammersmith, and of Mr. Wigley, the honorary secretary, 34, Hart-street, Bloomsbury."

What a pity it will be if the penance of a little sea-sickness should mar the pleasure of this agreeable excursion, and prove a set off against the happiness of securing at so easy a rate the "Pilgrimage Indulgences of Loretto." We cannot refrain from smiling at the idea how the barefooted palmers of the olden time would have wondered at the penance of a first-class railway carriage between London and Folkestone!

THE SAFER WAY.

SOME five-and-twenty years ago, the writer of the present article happened to be residing in a small town in one of the southern counties of Ireland. The physician of the place was a learned, skilful, and modest man. He did not cure every one whom he was called to attend, nor did he promise to do so. He availed himself of all the resources of his art with which he was acquainted, and he professed to do no more. He did not know of any panacea, and he was too honest to pretend that he did. The people were satisfied, and considered themselves fortunate in having among them so skilful a doctor. All went on smoothly, till at last there arrived in the town, one fine day, a foreign-looking man, with a profusion of hair on his head and face, and a large diamond ring on his finger. The gentleman began by covering the walls with placards, stating that he was possessed of an infallible remedy for all diseases; that the true art of healing was unknown to any but himself; and, as for the old fashioned doctors, that they were mere humbugs, and that to swallow their drugs was as much as any man's life was worth. Our good old doctor, who saw that the new arrival was a swindling mountebank, took the matter very quietly. When spoken to about the foreigner, he simply replied that it was possible his medicine might, in some cases, effect a cure, though from what he knew of its nature, he deemed the use of it to be highly dangerous. The mountebank, who was a shrewd fellow, did not fail to avail himself of this admission of the doctor. He forthwith had a larger placard than any of the former stuck up, headed "The Safer Way." The contents of the placard were, as nearly as we can recollect, as follows—"Dr. — allows that diseases may be cured by my remedy; I assert that they cannot be cured by his drugs; therefore, it is the safer course for all sick persons to take my medicine, which even my rival admits may effect a cure." Some weak-minded people of our town—for there were such there as in larger places—were actually convinced by this argument. Being naturally easily gulled by impostors, especially when the pretensions of these impostors partook of the marvellous, they were only too ready to swallow any argument, however absurd, which the bearded foreigner could produce in support of the efficacy of his wonderful nostrum.

Now, we have too much respect for the intelligence of the generality of our readers even to suspect that they could be imposed on by the shallow sophistry of that mountebank. And yet, there is a popular Romish argument, which most of our Roman Catholic readers, at least, must have heard, and which, although they may not have observed its weakness, is to the full as sophistical and worthless as that of the quack impostor. The argument is this—"Protestants allow that a Roman Catholic may be saved; the Church of Rome denies that a Protestant, as such, can be saved; therefore it is the safer way to belong to that Church [of Rome] in which salvation is on all sides acknowledged to be possible." This is precisely the mountebank's argument, substituting merely the two Churches for the two doctors; and its unsoundness in the one case may well raise a doubt as to its validity in the other.

But the importance of the subject demands that we should examine this argument a little more nearly. We propose, then, to consider whether our granting a possi-